



ADA Foundation/Knowledge Networks Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey

Funded by a grant in memory of Allene Vaden



Healthy Weight for Kids



Study Purpose

- Expand knowledge of children's attitudes and behavior patterns regarding weight, food selection, eating and physical activity patterns
- Assess parents' awareness of children's behaviors that influence weight
- Gain a deeper understanding of how parents and children relate to the topic of weight, eating and physical activity



Methodology

- Conducted three focus groups, children and parents, to learn best approach for topics
- Completed telephone interviews with (N=144) younger children (ages 8 - 2*)
- Completed online survey with (N=471) older children (ages 13 –17)
- Completed parallel online surveys with (N=615) parents (of younger and older children)

*due to FCC regulations, children under age 13 are not permitted to participate in Internet surveys or online data collection of any kind.



Survey Content Areas

- Why and when kids eat
- Children's meal and snack purchase habits
- School lunch participation and barriers to participation
- Children's involvement in physical activity
- Children's role models
- Nutritional value of foods eaten, self-assessment
- Body size and satisfaction: self and family assessment
- Parental interaction: opportunities for modeling parents' eating and physical activity
- Nutrition and body size communication
- Family habits relative to meal and bedtimes



Selected Survey Findings



Healthy Weight for Kids



Why Kids Eat

- Parents (78.5%) overestimated younger children's (61.8%) hunger
- Parents (35%) underestimated the extent to which children (43%) eat “because they are bored” or “because they are depressed” at least some of the time
- Parents (8.5%) also underestimated that children (16%) eat because they are angry, sad, or depressed at least some of the time



Why Kids Eat

- Older children eat more frequently than younger children “all” or “most” of the time because
 - Bored 15.9 vs. 7.7%
 - Angry, sad, or depressed 6.2% vs. 4.3%
 - Friends are eating 15.1% vs. 5.6%
- Younger children (13.2%) eat more than older children (7%) “all” or “most” of the time because parents/adults made them
- Boys ate more than girls because they were hungry (80.8% vs. 70.8%) “all” or “most”
- Girls ate more than boys “all” or “most” of the time because of being angry, sad or depressed (7.2% vs. 6.2%)




When Kids Eat

Category	All or Most of the time	Some of the time
After school	53.8 %	29.6%
After dinner	23.3%	32.0%
While doing homework	15.8%	36.6%
While watching TV, video, games	23.3%	45.2%
While on phone	6.2%	20.7%



Where Kids Buy Meals and Snack

- The majority of children purchase meals and snacks more frequently and from a wider array of venues than parents may realize
- With the exception of school lunch lines, parents under-predict this frequency



Food Purchase Habits Reported by Children and Parents' Perceptions

Purchase Opportunity	Some Days	Daily/Most Days	Parents' Perception Daily/Most days
School Lunch Line	15.4%	36.5%	49.4%
Vending, snack bars	19.4%	19.8%	11.5%
Convenience stores, vendors	21.4%	8.9%	4.9%
Grocery Stores	18.9%	10.5%	5.5%
Fast food, food court, other rest.	20.4%	11%	8.4%
Pizza Delivery	12.3%	4.6%	0.6%



School Lunch Participation

- More than 55% of children reported eating school lunch daily
- 21% reported sometimes taking a lunch from home and sometimes eating school lunch
- When asked how often children purchased from school lunch line, only 36% reported daily or most days
- Significantly more parents (49%) believed children purchased from lunch line daily or most days



Barriers to School Lunch Participation

- For those that did not eat school lunch, reasons given included:
 - Do not like what is offered (38%)
 - Parent prefers take lunch from home (25.9%)
 - Not cool (22%)
 - Friends do not eat it (22%)
 - Prefer vending options (18.3%)
- Younger children's decision not to eat school lunch appears to be driven more by friends' decision not to eat school lunch
- Girls are more likely than boys to strongly agree that they do not eat a school lunch because they do not like the food served



Body Satisfaction/Size

- Parents are likely to inflate child's body satisfaction
 - Parents of boys report 8.07, boys own score 6.92
 - Parents of girls report 7.51, girls own score 6.43
- Girls' body satisfaction is slightly lower than boys'
- Many more parents than children believe that their child's body size "is fine as is," and that their child need not gain or lose weight



How Kids Describe Their Body Size

- Significantly more girls (33%) describe their bodies as “slightly overweight” compared to boys (24%), although slightly more boys (4.5% than girls (2.0%) described their bodies as very overweight/heavy
- More older children (50.7%) reported being “slightly overweight” than younger children (40.3%); more younger (38.2%) children felt they were about the “right weight” than older (24.4%)



Physical Activity Habits

- Most children report participating in a team sport or group physical activity, although significantly more younger (81.3%) than older children (56.7%) reported these activities
- Girls (31.3%) are significantly more likely than boys (21.25) to prefer sedentary, indoor activities
- Parents over-predicted extent that children preferred outdoor activities (37.3% vs. 26.2%)
- Parents of boys (14.9%) more than of girls (7.8%) predicted their children preferred spending time being active vs. sedentary



Parent-Child Interaction

- Nearly 80% of children eat with parent/adult daily or most days, while only 15% play a sport, bike ride, or other activities
- On a daily basis, boys are significantly more likely than girls to report eating a meal (54.7% vs. 47.9%) or engaging in physical activity (21.4% vs. 9.1%) with their parent/adult
- 42% of children reported going to fast food restaurants or food courts with parent/adult one or more times a week and 47% reported grocery shopping one or more days



Parents Are Role Models

- Children, regardless of age, report that a parent serves as a role model, or the person s/he “would like to be like most.”
- As a child grows older, however, the degree to which a parent is a role model lessens, however mother is still top choice
- Boys are more likely to select a father as a role model, while girls more often select their mother



Children's Top Choices for Role Models

Boys Top Responses

- Father (19.3%)
- Sports celebrity (18%)
- Unsure/No one (13.8%)
- Mother (8.3%)

Girls Top Responses

- Mother (25.3%)
- Unsure/No one (12.8%)
- Music celebrity (11.8%)
- Actor/Actress (6.9%)



Application of Study Findings

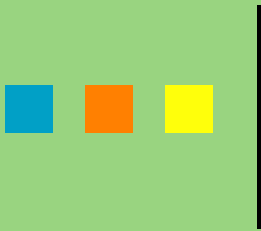


Healthy Weight for Kids



Utilize Data to Communicate Key Messages

- One-on-one counseling
 - A recent survey of children ages 8-17years and their families showed..... *Insert a key finding from the survey pertinent to the topic you are discussing....*What do you make out of this information?
 - Let the family/child “digest” the information and tell you how *they interpret it* and what it means to them in terms of potential change



Breaking down the data into key messages:

- Group setting:
 - Take a message or a set of messages and share at a community gathering, PTA meeting, religious group, work-site lunch-and-learn, professional group meeting
- Written form:
 - Take a message or group of messages and write a short article for a newsletter (neighborhood, community, school, work, professional) for a newspaper, or create handouts for your clients



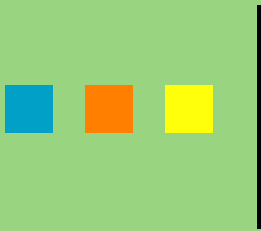
Key Findings to Communicate

- Children pick parents as their number one role model
- Parents spend little time being physically active with their child – however most parents do eat and watch TV with children almost daily
- Children have multiple opportunities away from parents to purchase meals and snacks
- Parents do not realize all the times during the day children are eating
- Children's degree of body satisfaction is influenced by parents' attitudes, nutrition and exercise-related factors and many children perceive themselves as overweight and/or needing to lose some weight

Message to Parents About Being a Role Model

- Although parents of young children may be acutely aware of this, as the child ages, they may or may not perceive themselves as an important role model
- Parents can model:
 - Healthy eating habits
 - A commitment to being physically active





Message to Parents Regarding Physical Activity

- A recent survey of children ages 8-17 years, and their parents, showed that many parents spend time engaging in some activities with their children, like eating, watching TV or movies, and playing video games. But, most parents did not play sports or engage in any physical activity with their children on a regular basis. *What do you make out of this?*



Encourage Parents to Be Active with Their Children

- Message to parents:
 - Be a role model by finding activities or sports that your family can enjoy
 - Find ways to be active in even the little things in life like daily routines
 - Make activity a priority for you personally
- Message to children:
 - Everyone needs to be more physically active
 - Any type of activity is good, not just sports
 - Get your parents involved being active with you - they need it, and you do too!



Message About Purchasing Meals and Snacks

- Message to parents:
 - Be aware that this happens often
 - Be aware of when and where it happens
 - Talk to your child about food choices outside the home
- Message to children:
 - Keep healthy eating in mind when purchasing food.... Making healthier food selections does not mean you are not “cool”
 - Balance, variety and moderation - make snacks count



Message About When Children Are Eating

○ Message to parents:

- Be aware that children are eating at multiple times during the day
- Be aware that children eat while doing other activities like homework, watching TV, playing on the computer
- Talk to your child about being aware of when they eat and take time out of activity to enjoy a snack

○ Message to children:

- Take a break from your computer game to have a snack and really enjoy it
- Try to limit snacking while watching television



Message to Parents About Food Selection

- Plan menus together, let them pick some of their favorite meals
- Take children to the store and have them help by reading labels and selecting produce
- Get them involved in food preparation
- Let them learn on their own by purchasing magazines and books that have sound nutrition information
- Consider discussing how they use their allowance and if they are buying too many snack items
- Be a positive role model



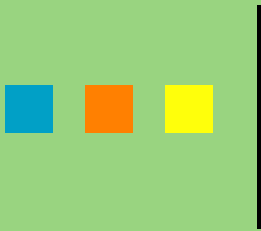
Message About Determinants of Body Satisfaction

- A recent survey of children ages 8-17 years showed that children had a tendency to be less satisfied with their body when: they felt their diet was less nutritious, they spent less time being physically active, had dieted, or had someone in their family be negative about their weight. *Tell me your thoughts about this.*



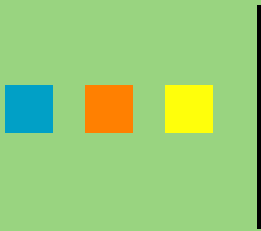
Message About Increasing Children's Body Satisfaction

- Discuss that parents and children MAY feel better about themselves if they eat a more nutritious diet and become more physically active
- Discourage dieting behaviors among children and teens, particularly any diet that is unsupervised or a “fad” diet
- Encourage parents to not comment negatively about children’s weights -- even if a child is overweight, all children need good self-esteem to face the challenges ahead of them



Message about Children's Perception of their Weight

- A recent survey of children ages 8-17 years showed that about half of all the girls and a third of all the boys felt that they needed to lose weight. When they had described their body, however, less of them had described themselves as overweight. *What do you make out of this?*



Message about Children's Perception of their Weight

○ Message for parents:

- Children may feel as if they need to be a certain size or shape in order to feel “OK”
- Parents should talk to their children about how they feel about their body size and positive and encouraging, regardless of body size – avoid negative remarks about their own weight or size

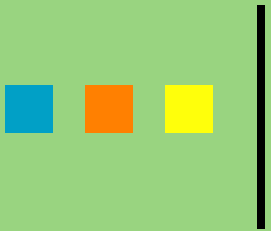
○ Message to children:

- We all come in different shapes and sizes, we are unique and not cut out from the same “cookie-cutter”
- Eating a healthy diet and being active are the best ways to keep our bodies strong, healthy and toned



Summary

- Stress a family focus for healthy weight
- Parents have multiple opportunities to influence children
 - Children name their parents as leading role model
 - Parents are spending time each day with children eating and watching TV – could use this time to promote healthy lifestyle choices and include fun physical activities
 - Children said they will talk to parents about weight and nutrition – another great opportunity for parents to be positive
 - If parent suggests child should lose weight, child is influenced so parents need to be careful with approach, be supportive no matter what child's weight/body shape

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